Aromatic Journey To Chios

The Island of Chios
Young Mastic Farmers

Vassillis and Roula have returned to their grandfather’s town - the medieval mastic village of Mesa to produce mastic and run an ecotourism business.

Getting to Know Mastic

*Pistacia lentiscus* var Chia
Mastic Specifics

- Evergreen shrub and grows very slowly about 2-3 meters high - lives 40-50 years.
- Needs an alkaline soil and the specific climate of southern Chios
- Propagated by tip cuttings, which are put straight into the field in the fall and watered - grows well with olive trees
- For the first 1-2 years it is necessary to irrigate and the tree does better with a nitrogenous fertilizer

Harvesting the Gum
Gum oozes from cuts

- Gum oozes silently and slowly from the wounds cut into the Mastic tree trunk and forms droplets.

Diamond like droplets slowly drip to the ground and harden.
The trapezi or table of white clay protects the gum from the soil and debris and keeps it clean and transparent.

1000 tons of kaolin is used per year on Chios to make the white tables under the mastic trees.

Mastic gum must coagulate before it is collected.
2 major collection dates August and September

The area under the tree is swept with a regular broom and the entire collection is picked up and put in a sack.

The sacks are taken back to the village

The Final Product
Historical Uses of Mastic

Used in traditional Greek medicine - 2,500 years

Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Theophrastos, and Galen

• gastrointestinal disorders
• gastralgia - pain in the stomach
• dyspepsia
• peptic ulcer

Uses Today

• Regulates immunity

Andriana C Kaliora, Maria G Stathopoulou, John K Triantafillidis, George VZ Dedoussis, Nikolaos K Andrikopoulos
Alterations in the function of circulating mononuclear cells derived from patients with Crohn's disease treated with mastic. World J Gastroenterol 2007 December 7; 13(45): 6031-6036

• seasoning in Mediterranean cuisine
• chewing gum
• perfumery
• in dentistry
• cosmetics skin care products
• and by the local population of Chios for the relief of gastralgia and protection against peptic ulcer

Sotirios Paraschos,1 Prokopios Magiatis,1 Vasilis Mihalas,1,2 Kalliopi Petraki,1,2 Antonios Kalliaropoulos,3 PERTs Maragkoudakis,1,2 Andreas Mentis,2 Dionyssios Sgouras,2* and Alexios-Leandros Skaltsounis1
In Vitro and In Vivo Activities of Chios Mastic Gum Extracts and Constituents against Helicobacter pylori
ANTIMICROBIAL AGENTS AND CHEMOTHERAPY,
American Society for Microbiology  Feb. 2007, p. 551-559 Vol. 51, No. 2
Petros Maragkoudakis,2 Andreas Mentis,2 Dionyssios Sgouras,2* and Alexios-Leandros Skaltsounis1
Join us for the 2009 Aromatic Voyage to Chios

June 18th - 23rd

Program Outline


Day 3. Walking tour, picnic, mastic tree cultivation process demonstration, swimming, cooking class.


Day 5. Workshop, dance class, closing night party.

Day 6. Closing session, transfer to Chios, shopping.